

## **BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE ON IRS PHONE LINES**

WASHINGTON -- More hours on Internal Revenue Service telephone lines have meant fewer busy signals and quicker access for callers. The IRS nearly doubled its hours of service this year, from 50 to 96 hours a week. Lines for both live assistance and forms orders are open from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

"Our goal is to provide taxpayers consistently first-rate service," IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti said. "Our longer hours for this season are a step in this direction."

As of Feb. 21, over 14 million callers had reached the IRS assistance and forms lines this filing season, about 100,000 more than the same period last year. But callers encountered nearly 7 million fewer busy signals.

Calls to TeleTax -- the automated refund and tax information service -- were up more than 2.5 million, to 14.8 million calls answered. Refund information is generally available for touch-tone callers from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. weekdays. Recorded tax topics are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The number for live assistance is 1-800-829-1040; for IRS forms or publications: 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676); for TeleTax: 1-800-829-4477.

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## 1998 FILING SEASON STATISTICS

Cumulative through the week ending 2/28/97 and 2/27/98

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>% Change</u>
<b>Individual Income Tax Returns</b>			
Total Receipts	39,050,000	38,761,000	- 0.7
Total Processed	24,488,000	26,950,000	10.1
<b>E-filing -- Total Receipts:</b>			
Standard E-file	10,117,000	12,184,000	20.4
TeleFile	3,282,000	4,102,000	25.0
<b>Refunds Certified by the Martinsburg Computing Center:</b>			
Number	22,486,000	24,614,000	9.5
Amount of principal	\$32.979 billion	\$36.836 billion	11.7
Average refund	\$1467	\$1497	2.0